

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, September 2, 1906, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL On board the Mabel of Beinn Bhreagh. Monday, September (2?) 1906. My darling Mabel:

A bowling storm and I am glad the Mabel of Beinn Bhreagh is on terra firma. The waves are grand. I put on my bathing dress and rubber shoes and went for a short walk along the shore towards Saphire Lake walking in the water to round the obstacles and clinging on for fear of accidents. The waves went clear over me in rounding some of the dead trees. Our fence comes right down to the water across the beach and I stood outside holding on to the fence, and had a fine bath without going into the water. The water came to me — not I to it.

Came back to house-boat after a glorious drenching and McDermid gave me some hot coffee and a cup of hot soup. This has cleared off the last remnants of a bad headache I have been suffering from since yesterday afternoon.

We all returned yesterday from Sydney on the Steamer Beverly. I staid up all night Saturday so as to catch the boat in the morning without difficulty and lay down in a stateroom the moment I get on board. I slept all the way to Beddeck and then Elsie made on awful mistake in trying to arouse me. She tried to pull off my eye-bandage and succeeded in letting a flood of light fall on my darkened eyes. I woke at once with the pain in my eyes but did not understand quite where I was. I thought I was in Sydney and she was trying to get me up for the boat. She did not explain but tugged away at my eye-bandage with all her strength. Aroused in this rough manner 2 I said I would not get up — they might go without me — and I would follow by the next train. Still she did not explain but poured a glass full of water over me — clothes and all — I had not undressed. I called for McDermid and asked him to stay with me — (he had gone to Sydney Saturday for a

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suit of clothes). Then things quieted down and Elsie left me in peace. After a while, as I was soaked, I got up intending to change my things — and found to my surprise that I was on board the Beverly at the wharf in Baddeck.

Elsie and Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor and Douglas McCurdy had left in the spring-board wagon to drive round the Bay as the Bay was too rough for a small boat. McDermid and McInnis were waiting for me with Dewey in my buggy. I felt so ill from my rough treatment that I went to the Telegraph House instead of driving round the Bay in my wet things — and lay down in a room there.

Later in the evening I crossed the Bay in the gig and went to bed. Early this morning — still feeling miserable — I thought a walk to the house-boat would refresh me but the pain in my eyes still continued — indeed it was worse than I have had it for years. The eyes were not simply light-struck but were actually squeezed by Elsie's desperate tugs at the bandage — and I still have pain though more than 24 hours have passed. Feel much refreshed however, by my bath — and hope I may be all right in the morning. If the storm continues I think we will try to fly the Frost King.

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Glad to find quite a budget of nice letters from you and one from Daidums. Was feeling too miserable last night to write and must delay further reply as I am not myself yet. Even with my glasses I feel that my eyes are strained reading my own writing.

I never could have believed that Elsie could have been so rough. She has hitherto managed me gently in the morning and seemed to understand my condition.

I do not yet know all that happened — but do know that I have been made ill and miserable by carelessness in the way of rousing me.

Good-night my sweet little wife, will try to write you a better letter tomorrow with all the news in it.

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Your loving husband, Alec.